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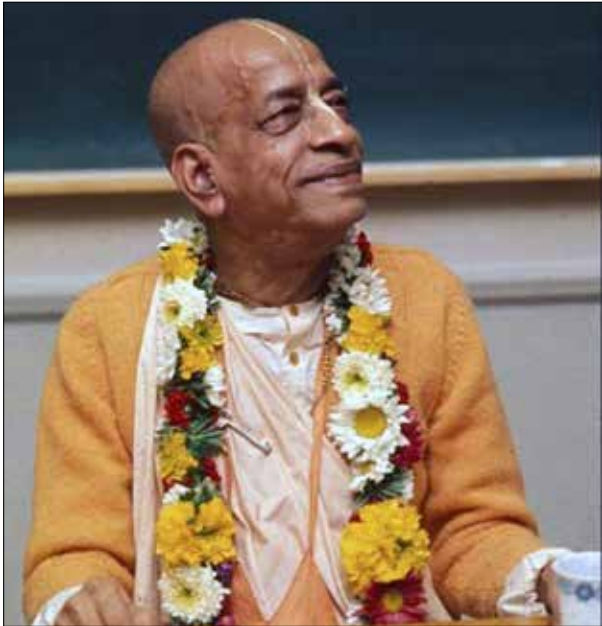
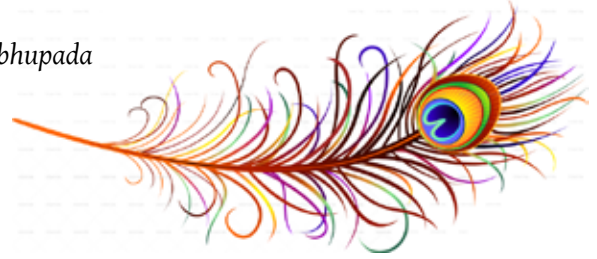
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KRISHNA IS THE SON OF YASHODA

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Krishna appeared simultaneously as the son of Devaki and as the son of Yashoda, along with the spiritual energy Yogamaya. As the son of Devaki, he first appeared as Vishnu, and because Vasudeva was not in the position of pure affection for Krishna, Vasudeva worshiped his son as Lord Vishnu. Yashoda, however, pleased her son Krishna without understanding his Godhood. This is the difference between Krishna as the son of Yashoda and as the son of Devaki. This is explained by Vishwanath Chakravarti on the authority of *Hari-varṇā*. 🙏

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 10.3.47



Unknown artist

THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

With the aim of obtaining a son, Nandaraj performed many sacrifices, but still no son was born. The residents of Vrajabhumi, who were all his friends, also took up vows and offered worship so that Nanda Maharaja could have a son. Still no son was coming. Yasomati, the wife of Nanda Maharaja, became very distressed. She gave up eating and was always sitting, hanging her head down and shedding tears.

Seeing the condition of his wife, Nanda Maharaja become very distressed and consoled her in various ways, saying, “Whatever is the will of Providence, that will take place.”

His wife Yashoda-mata said, “My dear husband, I will tell what I have thought of in my heart. I have performed

many sacrifices and have taken up many vows. But I have not performed the *dvādaśī-parama-vrata*.”

Hearing this, Nanda Maharaja became very happy and said, “Yes, very good. We have not performed this *vrata*. So we must do it.”

Nanda Maharaja called his priest. The priest described everything to him about the procedures, rules and regulations, to perform this *dvādaśī-vrata*.

The Yogini’s Visit

Nanda Maharaja and Yasomati-rani observed the *vrata* for one year. At the end of the *vrata*, Nanda Maharaja had a dream. Lord Hari appeared and, being very pleased with Him, said, “Your desire will soon be fulfilled. In every *kalpa* I come as your son, and in this *kalpa* I will also come as your son. I will manifest my babyhood *līlā* in your home. Every day you will see my pastimes and you will be very happy.”

Then Nanda Maharaja’s sleep broke. It was morning and birds were chirping. He decided to take bath in the Yamuna along with his wife Yasomati, and he took much wealth with him to give in charity. All of the demigods, *munis*, and *ṛṣis* came in the guise of beggars to receive charity from Nanda Maharaja. Nanda Maharaja and Yasomati completed their bath, and then started giving charity. Everyone became very pleased to receive charity from Nanda Maharaja. They all loudly shouted, “Nanda Maharaja *ki jaya!*” and “Yasomati-rani *ki jaya!*”

Then Nanda Maharaja returned home and offered worship to Bhagavan Vishnu. After finishing his daily activities, he came to his assembly and offered respect to the worshipable personalities such as his gurus and the Brahmins.

Snigdha Kantha’s narration continued: Just then, the gatekeeper came and informed Nanda Maharaja that a *brahmacārīṇī* had come. Hearing this, he stood up and welcomed her, offering her a nice seat. Nanda Maharaja washed her feet and worshiped her. Yashoda-mata began crying at the feet of that *brahmacārīṇī tapasvī*. The ascetic took Yashoda-mata onto her lap and, putting her hand on Yashoda’s head, blessed her, saying, “My dear queen, very soon a nice son will come and take birth.” Hearing this, all of the cowherd men and women said, “Nandarani *ki jaya!*”

When Nanda Maharaja’s brother Upananda heard the news he became very joyful and said, “This Gokul forest will be a great place of pilgrimage.” Hearing the *brahmacārīṇī*’s prophecy, all of the

inhabitants of Vrajabhumi became very joyful. They all came and offered *daṇḍavat-praṇāmas* at the feet of that *yoginī, brahmacārīṇī*. They built a cottage for her and she stayed there.

Yashoda’s Pregnancy

Snigdha Kantha said, “My dear brother Madhu Kantha, now tell how Krishna came to the womb of Yashoda-mata.” Madhu Kantha then spoke about this confidential truth:

For one year, Nanda and his wife observed *dvādaśī-vrata*. Then, on the night of the *kṛṣṇa-pratipat*, the first day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Māgha*, Nanda Maharaja had a dream. He saw a baby child with a blue complexion moving in the sky, and then he saw a girl with a golden-hued bodily complexion. The two of them entered into Nanda Maharaja’s heart. Then they came out of the heart of Nanda Maharaja and entered into the womb of Yashoda-mata.

In this way, Yashoda-mata became pregnant. Hearing this news, all of the *gopas* and *gopīs* became very blissful and happy. Every day they had grand festivals on account of Yashoda’s pregnancy.

Nanda Maharaja gave much charity to the Brahmins and *vaiṣṇavas*. Many persons were coming and going to Nanda’s house. Who all of those persons were, no one could say. Among them some demigoddesses were also coming.

After eight months of pregnancy, an astrologer told them, “On the eighth day of the dark fortnight of this month of *Bhādra*, the child will take birth on a most auspicious tithi. When this *bhādra-kṛṣṇāṣṭamī*, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Bhādra* came, the nurse said, “The child will be born today.” Immediately a maternity home was prepared and decorated nicely. Flower garlands were hung all over. Gates were also made out of various flowers. Expert nurses came to take care of the mother and child. In the heavenly planets all of the demigods became very joyful. Indradev was showering rain. On that day, everyone was drowning in an ocean of happiness, for the Supreme Lord was about to take birth.

All of the *gopīs* stayed awake that night. But due to the influence of Krishna’s *yoga-māyā*, they all fell asleep. When the child took birth everyone was sleeping. Even Yashoda-mata was asleep. There was no pain in the delivery at all. Without any pain, Yashoda-mata gave birth to Krishna, the Supreme Personality. That child was *putra-ratna*, a son like an invaluable gem.



Unknown artist

Krishna asks Mother Yashoda for the moon

Mathura and Vrindavan

Exactly at the same time when Yashoda-mata gave birth to Krishna in Vrindavan, in Mathura, in the prison house of Kamsa, Devaki also gave birth to a child. That is described in the tenth canto of the *Bhāgavatam*. Lord Hari appeared in Mathura in a four-handed form. He had a crown on his head and with his four hands he was holding a *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā*, and *padma* — a conchshell, disk, club and lotus. *Kanaka-kunḍala-karṇa* – on his two ears there were golden earrings, and a bright effulgence was coming out of his body. Although it was a dark and cloudy night, by the effulgence coming from the body of Lord Hari, everything was illuminated.

Seeing this wonderful child, Devaki paid obeisances with folded hands and offered prayers. Vasudev immediately took bath. How could he take bath in the prison house? He did so by meditation within his mind, *mānasa-snāna*. Also in his mind, he observed a grand festival for the birthday of Lord Hari and gave away innumerable cows in charity to the Brahmins and *vaiṣṇavas*. Like Devaki, he also offered prayers to Lord Narayan. Then Narayan told him, “Immediately take me to Vraja-Gokul and put me on the lap of Yashoda-mata.”

Hearing this, Vasudev was very, very happy. By the wonderful will of Lord Hari, those who were guarding the prison all fell asleep. All of the strong iron doors and shackles opened and Vasudev was free to leave. Exactly at the same time when Vasudev was leaving the prison of Kamsa, Yashoda-mata gave birth to a second child, a daughter.

When Vasudev came to the bank of the Yamuna he saw there was a great flood. The water was very high and all of the land was inundated. He thought, “How can I cross?” Just then Vasudev saw Mahamaya in the form of a she-jackal crossing the Yamuna. So Vasudev followed her.

Finally he came to the quarters of Nanda Maharaja. There he put his son on the lap of Yashoda-mata and took Yashoda’s daughter with him. 🐾

— From *Mathura Meets Vrindavan*, Chapter one. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, India. 2003.

ORIGIN OF THE FESTIVAL OF JANMASTAMI

Adapted from Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 15.248-265

In the *uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Yudhisthir Maharaja asked Krishna, “O infallible Lord, please describe to me in great detail the observance of *Janmāṣṭamī*. When did this observance commence?

What are the benefits of following it and what are the rules for its conduct?”

Krishna replied, “O Yudhisthir, when the wrestling match was over, Devaki entered into the arena. At that time the members of the Kukura and Andhaka dynasties all surrounded her and began to praise her and Vasudev. She then placed me on her lap, and with great affection she began to cry, saying, ‘My dear son! My dear son!’ With tears in his eyes and a choked voice that was filled with humility, Vasudeva came, embraced Balaram and me, and said, ‘Today my life has become successful and glorious because I have been able to see my two sons, the glories of the Yadu dynasty!’

“O king, seeing my parents’ happiness, everyone else became happy. Bowing before me, they all said, ‘Today we are happy. Today Krishna is born. Today the demon Kamsa has been killed in this wrestling arena. O Madhusudan, Krishna, be pleased with us and kindly remove all the doubts within our mind.’ They continued:

*yasmin dine prasūyeta devakī tvām janārdana
tad-dinam dehi vaikunṭha kurmas te tatra cotsavam
samyag-bhakti-prapannānām prasādam kuru keśava*

“O Krishna, O Lord who removes all sufferings, please tell us the day when Devaki gave birth to you. We will celebrate a festival in your honor. O Krishna, please be kind to your surrendered devotees.’ (Text 257)

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“Vasudev was astonished to hear their words. He joyfully looked at Balaram, and with the hairs of his body erect in ecstasy, he said, ‘Let the desire of the people be fulfilled. Please tell them what they want to know.’

“O son of Pritha, then, on my father’s order, I revealed the observance of *Janmāṣṭamī* to the people of Mathura as follows:

*paurāś ca taj-janma-dinam varṣe garbhāṣṭame gate
punar janmāṣṭamīm lokāḥ kurvantu brāhmaṇādayaḥ
kṣatriyā vaiśya-jāṭiyāḥ sūdrā ye ’nye ’pi dharmīṇaḥ*

“The *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, *sūdras*, and all others who are pious, from the age of eight years and older, should observe *Janmāṣṭamī*. (Text 261) [Srila Sanatan Goswami comments: The same is true for observing *Ekādaśī*. In *śāstra* it is said: *aṣṭa-varṣādhiko bālaḥ* — “Children eight years and older should also observe *Ekādaśī*.”]

*siṁha-rāśi-gate sūrye gagane jaladāgame
māsi bhādra-pade ’ṣṭamyām kṛṣṇa-pakṣe ’rdha-rātrake
śaśāṅke vṛṣa-rāśi-sṭhe prajāpatyarkṣa-saṁyute
vasudevena devakyām aham jāto janaḥ svayam*

“During the monsoon season, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Bhādra*, when the sun had entered Leo, and when the moon was in Taurus conjoined with the star *Rohiṇī*, at the halfway point of the night, I was born as the son of Vasudev and Devaki. (Texts 262 to 263)

*evam etat samākhyātām loke janmāṣṭamī-vratam
bhagavatyaś ca tatraiva kurudhvaṁ su-mahotsavam
mathurāyām tataḥ paścāl loke khyātīm gamiṣyati*

“This observance will be known in this world as *janmāṣṭamī-vrata*. On this day, celebrate a great festival honoring the goddess Devaki also. You can begin this festival in Mathura, and soon it will spread all over the world.’ (Text 264) [Srila Sanatan Goswami comments that the word *bhagavatyaḥ*, goddess, here may refer to both Devaki and goddess Durga.]

*ity ākarṇya yathākhyātām tathā lokair anuṣṭhitam
śāntir astu sukhaṁ cāstu lokāḥ santu nirāmayāḥ*

“After hearing these words, everyone began to observe as they were instructed. As a result, there was peace, happiness, and good fortune everywhere.” (Text 265)

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